Indiana Crop & Weather Report

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CROP REPORT FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 7

THIS REPORT IS THE FIRST CROP WEATHER REPORT FOR THE 2000 GROWING SEASON. A SERIES OF WEEKLY CROP PROGRESS REPORTS WILL BE PUBLISHED EACH MONDAY AT 3:00 P.M. EST THROUGHOUT THE CROP SEASON. These reports will cover planting and harvesting activities, crop development, weather data and timely crop management information provided by Purdue University experts. For the earliest possible access look for these reports on the Internet shortly after the 3:00 P.M. release time. Our Home Page address is listed at the bottom of this publication. Follow the links to view text and PDF files.

WINTER WHEAT

Thirty-two percent of the **winter wheat** acreage is **jointed**, compared with 18 percent last year and 16 percent for the 5-year average. Winter wheat **condition** is rated 73 percent good to excellent, compared to 80 percent at this time a year ago.

SEED BED PREPARATION

One percent of the **corn** acreage is planted, on par with a year ago. Normally, less than one percent is planted at this time. Much needed precipitation fell in some areas with heavier amounts in the central and southern areas of the State. Field preparation has made good progress this spring. Dry field conditions exist in most areas. Farmers are applying fertilizer, tilling soils, purchasing supplies and preparing equipment for the upcoming planting season. Many farmers were able to complete tillage operations and application of fertilizer last fall following the early fall harvest of corn and soybeans.

OTHER CROPS AND LIVESTOCK

Availability of hay and roughage supplies was rated 7 percent surplus, 64 percent adequate 23 percent short and 6 percent very short. **Pasture condition** was rated 7 percent excellent, 25 percent good, 41 percent fair, 20 percent poor and 7 percent very poor. Livestock are in mostly good condition. Calving and lambing are active.

DAYS SUITABLE and SOIL MOISTURE

For the week ending Friday, 4.6 days were rated **suitable for fieldwork**. **Topsoil moisture** was rated 21 percent very short, 29 percent short, 43 percent adequate and 7 percent surplus. **Subsoil moisture** was rated 33 percent very short, 37 percent short, 27 percent adequate and 3 percent surplus.

CROP PROGRESS

Crop	This Week	Last Week	Last Year	5-Year Avg
	Percent			
Corn Planted	1	0	1	0
Winter Wheat Jointed	32	18	18	16

CROP CONDITION

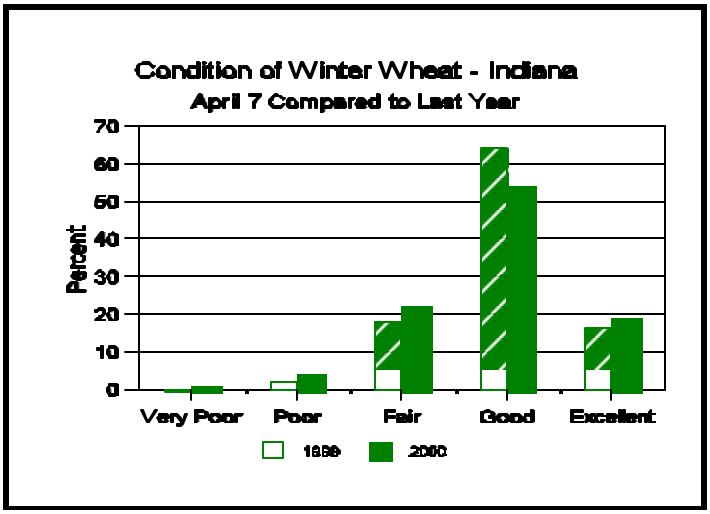
Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excel-lent
	Percent				
Winter Wheat 2000	1	4	22	54	19
Winter Wheat 1999	0	2	18	64	16
Pasture	7	20	41	25	7

SOIL MOISTURE

	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
	Percent		
Topsoil			
Very Short	21	16	1
Short	29	35	8
Adequate	43	47	73
Surplus	7	2	18
Subsoil			
Very Short	33	33	3
Short	37	45	13
Adequate	27	22	74
Surplus	3	0	10

--Ralph W. Gann, State Statistician
–Bud Bever, Agricultural Statistician
E-Mail Address: nass-in@nass.usda.gov
http://info.aes.purdue.edu/agstat/nass.html

Crop Progress



Planter Maintenance: There's Still Time!

Uniform stands of corn are important for achieving full yield potential from those bags of expensive seed corn that you buy and plant. Uneven plant-to-plant spacing and/or emergence can reduce yield potential by seven to 15 bushels per acre, with little hope of ever recovering that difference by the end of the growing season.

Be sure to inspect your planter now while there's still time to replace worn parts and make adjustments. If you don't have the time or skills, then make arrangements for your dealer to service your planter. Here are some tips and guidelines for planter maintenance items. More specific help is available from your friendly, neighborhood planter dealer.

After planting is completed. . .

Hopefully, you already completed these items shortly after you finished planting last spring. Put them on your "to do" list for the end of the coming planting season.

- **U** One of the most important strategies for avoiding excessive "weathering" of your planter is to protect the planter from the elements in the off-season. Ideally, store the planter indoors. If this is not possible, then at least store it under cover outside.
- **U** Thoroughly lubricate all chains and bearings. Clean disc openers and coulters; apply rust preventive "paint" to avoid rust buildup. If practical, remove the planter chains and soak in oil until the next planting season.

Pre-season maintenance

Take advantage of spring fever (or cabin fever!) during the winter and go over your planter with the proverbial fine-toothed comb. A precursor to this activity is to locate the planter's operations manual and browse through it to refresh yourself on important preseason maintenance activities.

- **U** Check and replace all worn out parts.
- **U** Ensure that coulters and disc openers are aligned accurately to ensure accurate furrow opening and seed placement.
- **U** On Case™ planters, replace any worn seals and check the trueness of fit of the seed drum to ensure uniform air pressure and accurate seed metering.
- **U** Adjust or replace worn disc openers. Worn openers cut "W"-shaped furrows rather than "V" and may interfere with accurate seed positioning and seed firming. Adjust the shims of the openers so that bottoms of the openers just touch. Replace the openers when it is no longer possible to adjust their closeness.
- **U** Replace worn planter chains or rusty, stiff chain links. Less than smooth operation of planter chains decreases seeding accuracy.
- **U** Inflate tires to their proper air pressure. Under- or over-inflated drive tires influence the accuracy of the planter transmission settings for seed drop.
- **U** Clean seed tubes and monitor sensors. Seed treatment residues interfere with accuracy of monitor sensors. Mouse nests have a bit of influence on uniformity of seed drop through the seed tubes.
- **U** Check the bottom of each seed tube for wear that changes the shape of the tube opening and influence the final trajectory of the seed dropping from the seed tubes.
- **U** For finger-pickup type planters, check the finger-pickup backplates for rust buildup and seed treatment residues. Excessive buildup of either rust or seed treatment residues may cause jerky movement of the finger mechanism. Excessive rust buildup can also scarify or damage the corn kernels, resulting in decreased seed quality the moment you plant the seed. Also. . .

(Continued on Page 4.)

Weather Data

Week ending Sunday April 9, 2000

Station	Past Week Weather Summary Data							Accumulation April 1, 2000 thru April 9, 2000				
	Air Temperature				Precip.		Avg 4 in Soil Temp	Precipitation		GDD Base 50°F		
	Hi	Lo	Avg	DFN	Total	Days		Total	DFN	Days	Total	DFN
Northwest(1)												
Valparaiso_Ag	62	26	44	-3	1.80	3		1.81	+0.66	4	6	-5
Wanatah	61	25	43	-3	1.02	2	49	1.10	-0.01	3	5	-4
Wheatfield	63	24	44	-2	0.94	2		1.00	-0.11	3	9	+0
Winamac	62	25	45	-2	0.85	1	46	0.85	-0.22	1	8	-4
North Central(2)												
Logansport	63	26	45	-3	0.42	4		0.43	-0.56	5	10	-1
Plymouth	61	26	43	-4	1.20	3		1.22	+0.09	4	9	-5
South_Bend	59	25	43	-3	0.91	4		0.98	-0.19	6	8	-1
Young_America	65	26	45	-3	0.36	2		0.36	-0.63	2	17	+6
Northeast(3)												
Bluffton	62	26	45	-3	0.50	2	46	0.50	-0.58	2	9	-4
Fort_Wayne	62	25	45	-2	0.59	1		0.59	-0.40	1	14	+5
West Central(4)												
Crawfordsville	64	22	44	-6	0.47	4	49	0.47	-0.72	4	11	-10
Perrysville	63	22	45	-4	0.07	1	52	0.07	-1.08	1	15	-3
Terre_Haute_Ag	68	27	47	-4	1.73	2	51	1.73	+0.63	2	16	-8
W_Lafayette_6NW	64	25	45	-2	0.17	1	47	0.20	-0.85	2	16	+4
Central(5)												
Castleton	63	26	46	-3	1.89	5		1.95	+0.87	6	13	-5
Greenfield	63	25	46	-3	2.77	5		2.78	+1.61	6	17	+2
Greensburg	64	26	47	-3	2.84	5		3.04	+1.86	6	19	+0
Indianapolis_AP	62	25	47	-3	2.19	5		2.19	+1.09	5	27	+6
Indianapolis_SE	62	26	46	-4	2.60	4		2.60	+1.52	4	15	-3
Tipton_Ag	63	25	44	-2	0.49	3	47	0.49	-0.66	3	11	+2
East Central(6)												
Farmland	64	26	45	-2	2.74	5	47	2.77	+1.71	6	9	+0
New_Castle	62	23	44	-3	2.51	6		2.54	+1.37	7	7	-2
Southwest(7)												
Dubois_Ag	70	29	50	-2	1.93	4	51	2.39	+1.12	5	37	+5
Evansville	70	28	51	-3	1.27	3		1.50	+0.29	4	47	+3
Freelandville	67	30	49	-3	2.54	3		2.54	+1.42	3	21	-8
Shoals	71	26	49	-3	1.44	4		1.66	+0.44	5	23	-5
Vincennes_5NE	67	27	48	-3	1.11	2	47	1.22	+0.10	3	19	-10
South Central(8)												
Bloomington	64	27	47	-4	2.24	4		2.24	+1.09	4	17	-10
Tell_City	70	31	52	-2	1.80	3		2.12	+0.68	4	39	+0
Southeast(9)												
Scottsburg	70	26	49	-3	1.59	4		2.06	+0.80	5	25	-4

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).
GDD = Growing Degree Days.
Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches.
Precipitation Days = Days with precipitation of 0.01 inch or more.
Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

The above weather information is provided by AWIS, Inc.
For detailed ag weather forecasts and data visit the AWIS home page at
www.awis.com or call toll free at 1-888-798-9955.

Planter (continued)

- Check for worn down 'dimples' on the backplates. If worn down, more double seed drops will occur.
- Check and adjust the tension on the fingers. Misadjusted finger pressure directly affects the ability of the unit to accurately singulate seed.
- Check the condition of seed conveyor belt. Age and lengthy exposure to seed treatment residues results in brittleness that interferes with the smooth travel of the belt. Remember that perfect singulation by the seed metering unit may be offset by interference with the seeds' travel to the furrow.

- Finally, CALIBRATE THE PLANTER!

Planter calibration

All the maintenance in the world is for naught if you head to the field without calibrating the planter. Difference among seed lots can influence planter calibration. Obviously, using a single planter for both corn and soybean planting influences calibration. Time spent calibrating a planter is time well spent.

- For pneumatic planters (air or vacuum), calculate the seed weight for each seed lot you will be seeding. Do this by simply dividing the number of seeds per bag by the weight of the bag. Both values are listed either on the seed tag or on the bag itself. For example, an 80,000 seed bag divided by 50 pounds equals 1,600 seeds per pound. From the operations manual, identify the correct pressure (air or vacuum) for the calculated seed weight. Finally, identify the correct seed disc (or drum) for the calculated seed weight. Do this for each seed lot you have purchased and record the results somewhere that will be easily accessible during planting.
- From the planter's operations manual, identify the correct transmission settings for your desired seeding rate.
- Calibrate actual seed drop with the planter transmission settings and the planter monitor readouts. Do the calibration at normal planting speeds and seeding rates under as close to field conditions as possible (Not simply down the farm lane!). One trick to simplify locating seed in the furrow without a lot of digging is to temporarily tie up the closing wheels on one or more units during the calibration operation.
- While you are at it, calibrate any pesticide and fertilizer planter attachments at the same time. Application rates can easily change from year to year.
- Check that the planter toolbar is parallel to the soil surface when the planter is in the ground and running. The consequences of not being parallel with the ground affect disc opener depth, press wheel efficiency, and the adequacy of seed to soil contact.

Bottom line

A little attention and tender loving care paid to your planter now will pay big dividends later in terms of more uniform stands of corn and higher grain yields. The beauty of this advice is that most of the maintenance and adjustments necessary for bringing a planter into shape are relatively inexpensive, while the potential returns in yield can be quite large.

–Bob Nielsen, Agronomy Dept, Purdue University

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